

GREALITVANIAN (BELARUSIAN) COOKBOOK

Greatlitvania (Belarus) is a country of plains, woodlands, and beautiful lakes. It is situated on historic thoroughways running from North to South and from East to West. During the Middle Ages these thoroughways served as commercial and cultural links between the Northern European nations, Byzantium, and the Muslim world. Therefore there are few places in Belarus not known to history. There are ruins of ancient castles, castles which have been preserved for posterity, churches, and monasteries dating back to the beginning of the 11th century. Several independent Belarusian states consolidated in the 13th century, thus forming one united Belarusian state, known as Grand Duchy of Lithuania. According to the famous Lithuanian Law Code, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania was governed by the Grand Duke and Parliament. The first university in Eastern Europe was founded there in Vilna, in 1570. Merchants were engaged in world trade; printing offices, published both religious and secular books; painters and builders were called beyond the boundaries of their country.

At the end of the 18th century, this state was overrun by the armed forces of Russia, conquered, and brought into subjection. Greatlitvania (Belarus) belongs to Western civilization. In its origin, history, culture, psychology, and ethnographical traits, it is a distinct entity and differs from her neighbors, especially the Russians and the least from the Baltic nations. The name Belarus (Byelorussia) was forced upon us by the Russian occupant.

Old folklore and traditions supply poets, painters, and musicians with inspiring themes. At present, however, the subdued nation is suffering her Golgotha under Russian communism. Part of our nation is in exile and scattered throughout the world. However, as the world is growing smaller due to modern inventions, we hope to keep together believing in the words of our patriotic song:

The stars will not dim
as long as there is a sky,
our native country will not perish
as long as her people live!

PREFACE

The wife of the former President Herbert Hoover, in her preface contained in the Congressional Club Cookbook wrote: "It is astonishing how closely each of the great majority of us keeps to the food and cooking habits of her own line of ancestors."

People who have come to the United States of America from the historical Grand Duchy of Lithuania (today Belarus) confirm this fact. They find great pleasure in their native food. And so, to the second generation of Belarusian immigrants, I dedicate this little book.

Secondly it is written for the wives of Americans of Belarusian descent who, in preparation of Belarusian food, are faced with a problem difficult to solve even with the help of books. They will therefore be delighted to find within these pages recipes by good cooks, which will satisfy even those sons who claim that foreign food gives either heartburn or is tasteless, that only the food which mother cooked is exactly right.

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New York, 1961
Mary Stankevich
Chairman
American-Belarusian Women' Society

Grateful acknowledgment is made to Mrs. Savionak, Mrs. Holak, and other neighbors who helped me in the preparation of the second enlarged edition of this book.

Hawthorne, New Jersey, 1972
Mary Stankevich

SOUPS

Recipes serve four, unless otherwise indicated.

ZACIRKA (EGG BARLEY)

1 quart water, 1/2 beaten egg, 1 cup flour, 1/2 tsp. salt.

To make egg barley, mix flour and egg together until it forms a coarse meal. Bring water to a boil, add salt. Add flour and egg mixture slowly, while constantly stirring. Boil for 10-15 minutes. Serve with milk. Milk may be used instead of water to cook egg barley. 1/4 cup of cornstarch can replace 1/4 cup of flour.

KRUPNIK, KRUPIENIA (BARLEY SOUP)

6 cups water, 2/3 cup barley, 3 carrots, meaty ham bone, salt to taste.

Wash barley in hot water. Soak overnight in three cups of water. Add three more cups of water to soaked barley and cook together with ham bone. Boil about one hour, add shredded carrots and boil 1/2 hour longer. This soup can be made without meat and eaten with milk and a teaspoon butter.

KRUPNIK Z HRYBAMI I MIASAM (BARLEY AND MUSHROOM SOUP)

1 quart water, 1/2 lb fresh mushrooms or 1/4 cup dried mushrooms, 1 lb beef (plate), 1/2 cup barley, 1 small onion, 1/2 cup sour cream, salt to taste.

Boil meat and barley as in the previous recipe. If dried mushrooms are used, break them into small pieces, soak for two hours in water and boil with meat. If fresh mushrooms are used, cut them up and fry with chopped onion in a little fat for about 10 minutes. One cup of diced canned mushrooms can be used. Add mushrooms and season to taste. Remove meat, cut into small pieces and return to the soup. Half a cup of sour cream may be stirred in, after the soup cools a little.

ŠČAÚJO (WARM SORREL)

1 quart soup stock or water, 1 lb sorrel (2 cups), 3 hard boiled eggs, 1/2 cup sour cream, salt to taste.

Wash and chop sorrel, drop into boiling water or stock. Boil 5 minutes. Add chopped eggs. Place one tablespoon sour-cream into soup plate, mix with a small amount of soup until smooth, add more soup and serve hot. If soup is too tart, add water or soup stock. If eaten with potatoes, the tartness gives additional flavor. If desired, one may use half a pound of sorrel and half a pound of spinach. As a variation, one or two potatoes may be cooked in the water to prepare the soup.

ŠČAÚJO Z KRAPIVAJU (SORREL WITH NETTLES)

1 quart of soup stock, 1/2 lb sorrel (1cup), 1 lb young spring nettles, 4 browned and sliced small sausages, 1/2 cup sour cream, salt to taste.

Wash sorrel and nettles. Chop them and boil in soup stock. Cook until tender. Add browned sliced sausages and gradually stir in sour cream.

ŠČAÚJO, CHAŁADNIK (COLD SORREL)

1 lb sorrel, 1 stalk green onion chopped with salt, 1/2 cup sweet or sour cream, 2 hard boiled eggs, peeled and chopped cucumber, 1 tsp. chopped dill.

Drop washed and chopped sorrel into boiling water and boil 5 minutes. Add chopped green onion, mashed with salt, peeled and chopped cucumber and chopped egg white of one of two hard boiled eggs. Mash egg yolks and add. Add sweet or sour cream. Sprinkle with chopped dill before serving.

BURAKI (RED BEETS)

1 quart of soup stock, 4-6 medium sized red beets, 1/2 cup sour cream, 1-2 tbs. lemon juice or vinegar, salt to taste.

Wash beets, boil in skin until tender. Peel and cut julienne style (in strips). As a variation, beets may be peeled, halved and boiled with meat. When tender, beets can be shredded and seasoned with salt and lemon juice or vinegar. Place one tablespoon sour cream into soup plate, mix with a small quantity of soup until smooth, add more soup and serve.

VIALIKALITOŪSKIJA BURAKI (BELARUSIAN BEET SOUP)

1/2 lb beef, 1/2 lb smoked pork bones, 2 small sausages, 2 large red beets, 1 tbs. lard, 1/2 cup sour cream, 4 potatoes, 1 carrot, 1 parsley, 2 onions, 1 tbs. tomato sauce, 1 tbs. flour, sugar, salt, vinegar or lemon juice to taste.

Make soup stock from meat and bones. Remove the bones. Fry sliced carrot, parsley and onion. Add tomato sauce and cook 10 more minutes. Place potatoes, cut into cubes, in soup stock and bring to a boil. Add sliced boiled beets, flour fried with fat and boil for 10-15 minutes. Add sugar and lemon juice or vinegar to taste. Serve with sliced browned sausages and sour cream diluted in a little liquid.

BURAKI, CHAŁADNIK (COLD RED BEETS)

Cook as above (Red beets) but without meat. Season with salt, sugar and lemon juice. A stalk of green onion, finely cut, peeled and sliced cucumber, and chopped dill may be added. Blend in sour cream before serving.

BURAKI, CHAŁADNIK, PAAMERYKANSKU (COLD RED BEETS, THE AMERICAN WAY)

1 can of beets (1 lb 1 oz.), 1 cucumber, 2-4 hard boiled egg whites, 1 cup diluted powdered milk, 1 yoghurt, ice cubes, salt, lemon juice or vinegar to taste.

Mix powdered milk with water and add yoghurt to make one quart. Let stand in a warm place for a few hours or overnight. Pour the juice from the beets into this sour milk. Peel the cucumber and slice thin. Slice the egg whites a little thicker. Chop the beets. Add salt and lemon juice or vinegar. Mix and add ice cubes. This soup is rich in vitamins and has a low caloric value.

to be continued

Source: Grealitvanian (Byelorussian) cookbook. Second enlarged edition. Hawthorne, N.J., 1972.

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